

**Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2003
6 to 9 p.m.
College Hill Library, 3705 West 112th Avenue, Room L-107, Westminster**

Victor Holm, the Board's chair, called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

BOARD / EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Downey, Anne Fenerty, Earl Gunia, Erin Hamby, Victor Holm, Bill Kossack, Mary Mattson, Mike Maus, Bill McNeill, Sean Rea, Andrew Ross, Conrad Stoldt / Rich Schassburger (DOE), Steve Gunderson (CDPHE), Mark Aguilar (EPA).

BOARD / EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Fabian, Shirley Garcia, Eric Morris / Dean Rundle (USFWS)

PUBLIC / OBSERVERS PRESENT: Alan Trenary (Westminster), Rob Henneke (EPA), Randy Leitner (Kaiser-Hill), John Schneider (DOE), Phil Tomlinson (Thornton), KC Becker (Boulder), Mike Fenerty (Boulder), Dave Hawley (Boulder), Macon Cowles (Boulder), Ken Korkia (RFCAB staff), Patricia Rice (RFCAB staff)

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD / NEW BUSINESS:

There was no public comment.

New Business: Victor Holm: Victor reported the Executive Committee approved a \$150 appreciation gift for staff member Jerry Henderson who recently left employment with the Board. A card was circulated for members to sign.

He next reported that the bi-monthly SSAB Chairs conference was held the previous Tuesday and that he had sent out copies of the minutes from the call via email to all members. He asked members to contact him if they had any questions.

Finally, he asked the Board's view on whether they should proceed with the recommendation that was drafted on the pre-decisional draft of the Proposed Action Memorandum for the 771/774 Groundwater Collection System. The official public comment draft of the document was released on December 1. He asked Ken Korkia to provide a brief overview of the changes to the document and whether the Board's recommendations made on the preliminary draft were still relevant to the public comment draft. Ken reported that most of the changes to the draft document were to add information, but that there were no changes to the proposal itself. As for the recommendations, Ken noted that they were still relevant, with the possible exception of one where additional information requested by the Board had been added. The Board agreed to keep consideration of the recommendations on this agenda, rather than waiting until next month. Ken noted that the comment period closes on December 30.

New Business: Anne Fenerty: Anne noted that she previously was disappointed that the Board had not commented on the alternatives for access to the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. She distributed a copy of the alternatives to the new members of the Board. She then shared a December 3, 2003, communication developed by the Boulder County Commissioners relaying their response to questions sent out by the Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments about the refuge. The Commissioners support very limited access, as per Alternative C of the analysis. They noted that with the amount of residual contamination and the need to protect the safety of citizens in the area as their highest priority, access to the refuge should be limited, controlled, and consistent with wildlife refuge priorities for land that has been shown to have considerable radionuclide contamination. (Note: The minutes were revised at the January 8, 2004 Board meeting to reflect a follow-up question asked by Board member Bill McNeill. Mr. McNeill asked

ADMIN RECORD

Steve Gunderson whether the state health department had any health or safety concerns with any of the alternatives proposed for the future wildlife refuge. Mr. Gunderson replied that all four alternatives would provide necessary health and safety protection as long as the final cleanup standards as addressed in the Rocky Flats Cleanup Agreement are met.)

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON MODIFICATIONS TO THE BUILDING 371 DECOMMISSIONING OPERATIONS PLAN:

Randy Leitner of Kaiser-Hill gave a presentation on the status of the Building 371/374 project and the proposed modifications to the Decommissioning Operations Plan (DOP Mod). Buildings 371 and 374 were completed in 1981 and were designed to replace plutonium pit assembly and other operations in Buildings 771/774 and 776/777. Design deficiencies in Building 371 were discovered during pilot-scale operations. As a result, B371 was not used for its intended purpose, although plutonium operations were carried out in B374. Since the early 1990s, B371 has been used to store plutonium and uranium metal, oxide, residues, transuranic (TRU) waste, transuranic mixed waste, low-level waste and low-level mixed waste and was also used as the site for the plutonium stabilization and packaging (PuSP, known as "PEW-sap").

B371 is 365,000 square feet, and contains four levels, including a basement and sub-basement that goes as deep as 45 feet underground.

The site had originally planned to decontaminate the entire building to free-release levels. However, the DOP Mod would allow some contamination to remain in the building below 6 feet of final grade. Randy said the changes were being requested because of concerns over worker safety in the building. He said aggressive decontamination methods put workers at great risk.

Randy said with respect to the project status, nuclear operations and the plutonium stabilization and packaging is complete. Shipments of special nuclear materials are complete. The Protected Area surrounding the building is closed. More than 200 of 428 gloveboxes and 154 of 350 tanks have been removed. Sludge has been taken from 21 of 28 tanks in B374, all the 1,147 pallets in the Central Storage Vault have been removed, and the demolition contractor, the Washington Group, is on site.

Randy said core samples taken from under the buildings show no radioactive contamination and the regulators have agreed to "No Further Action" for areas underneath the buildings. The site is in the process of taking 30 random and 15 biased samples in the basement and subbasement for gamma-spectroscopic analysis. He said, however, that large sections of the basement are at unrestricted release levels, and that much of the contamination is restricted to areas that are small compared to the area of the basement.

The Central Storage Vault is an area of high contamination. The Vault runs through the center of the basement floor, 100 yards long, 20-30 feet wide and 45 feet tall. Shelves that once stored radioactive material climb to the ceiling. The walls are now below 7 nanocuries per gram (nCi/g) or 7,000 picocuries per gram (pCi/g). Contamination on the floor is easily removable, he said.

The DOP Mod proposes the following plan:

- From 0 to 3 feet, contamination would be removed to free-release standards and the building slab removed.
- From 3 to 6 feet of final grade, the building slab will remain but must meet existing unrestricted release criteria.
- Greater than 6 feet below final grade, the building slab will remain and any contamination on the slab will not exceed 7 nanocuries per gram (nCi/g), which is 7,000 picocuries per gram (pCi/g).
- Removable contamination will not exceed unrestricted release criteria.
- All remaining contamination will be fixed.

The plan at this time is to demolish the top two floors, which are both aboveground, with conventional demolition techniques and haul away the resulting rubble. The site then plans to collapse the basement and subbasement support structures using explosives, to allow the basements to fall into the building foundation. The resulting rubble will be left in place. All parts of the structure where the explosives will be attached will be decontaminated to free release standards.

Randy said environmental restoration activities after demolition will be addressed through the groundwater model of the area.

Some board members expressed some skepticism about how the site would be able to remove contamination from the building, especially in the infinity rooms. A concern was also raised that the site had previously stated it would not use explosives in buildings that are contaminated.

Steve Gunderson of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment responded that the infinity rooms in other buildings, such as B771 and B776, were far more contaminated than those in B371 and have been decontaminated. He said the infinity room in B371 would be decontaminated, cut up, and sent off as low-level waste. He said CDPHE is the lead regulator on the project and the site would have to prove that the building is free-released for demolition. With regard to using explosives, Steve said he thought the site would have to use explosives to bring down part of the building because the building is so sturdy and the walls and floors are thick. The main reason to use explosives is to protect the workers, who in some cases would be put at risk trying to cut out large chunks of concrete in the basement. Large falling chunks of concrete have the potential to kill or maim a worker.

A board member said he is concerned that 7 nCi/g was set up as a subsurface soil level but in the case of a building, contamination is on the surface. In other words nanocuries per gram is a volumetric measurement of contamination, whereas building surfaces are measured as an area. Thus it is difficult to know what 7 nCi/g means in terms of surface area.

Another board member was concerned about "void space" in the rubble left behind by the basements falling into the building. Randy said the goal is to have no void space.

Another board member stated the use of explosives in a contaminated building would be a concern to the public and asked how to help the public feel comfortable with that concept. A DOE spokesman said the document has been and will be given a good airing at both RFCAB and Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Government meetings.

The Board will review the document and develop comments and recommendations at its upcoming Committee Night on Dec. 18. The board as a whole will consider approving the recommendation at its meeting January 8, 2004.

DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SITE SPECIFIC ADVISORY BOARD (EMSSAB) CHAIRS LETTER TO DOE UNDER SECRETARY ROBERT CARD:

The EMSSAB Chairs at their September meeting decided to send a letter to DOE outlining concerns about the transition of contaminated sites between environmental management and legacy management, and the need for DOE to provide funding to the local site specific advisory boards during this transition period. Victor Holm briefed the Board on the letter, noting that it was not a formal recommendation requiring consensus of the Board. There are two major points raised in the letter. First, the Chairs request that Environmental Management and Legacy Management formalize the collaborative management of the current boards to determine how management of and support to the boards will transfer to Legacy Management. Second, they request that Environmental Management reverse the dramatic cuts it has made to closure site SSAB budgets, collaborate with Legacy Management to adequately fund SSABs throughout the transition from cleanup to stewardship, and to work with communities and the SSABs to determine the appropriate role and support for citizen involvement in long-term stewardship itself.

The only comment raised on the letter was from member Anne Fenerty who noted that the letter was asking for full funding from DOE. The Board has asked for additional funding three previous times and had received a response from the contracting officer that, because of the limited amount of work left for the Board, the budget was going to be cut. She also noted a concern about how the Board was spending its money, in that the Board should have a goal-oriented budget. The goals as outlined in the transition document were outreach, independent review, and board education. She believes the Board has done none of this. Also, she said the Board would have a carryover of funds from this year of about \$90,000 that she believes should have been spent on those items.

The Board approved the letter with one dissent noted.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Comment: Dave Hawley: Dave is a member of the Sierra Club, but does not represent them officially. He comes from the information technology world where there typically is a systems integrator or consultant who is used as a watchdog. He asked whether such a process was used by DOE or by the Board to have this sort of watchdog to provide a double check of the site contractor.

In response, Victor Holm noted that the Board in the past used an independent contractor to review the work by DOE and the regulators in setting the soil action levels for the site. The Board has also used university contacts to review issues such as testing of deer tissue samples. Steve Gunderson with CDPHE responded that his agency assigns staff to oversee what happens in many of the buildings at the site and also for the environmental restoration activities. They also have collected historical and current monitoring information on a single database that is available for anyone to review. Mark Aguilar with EPA noted that the site uses an independent contractor to perform independent validation and verification. They also do independent air monitoring during building demolition projects, most recently at Building 865. EPA also brings in outside experts from places such as its Las Vegas laboratory to verify the work of the independent contractor.

Member Bill McNeill asked whether there was a single document that provided information about quality assurance and quality control related to activities of the contractor. Steve Gunderson stated that such a single document does not exist, but suggested that for monitoring, one might check out the Integrated Monitoring Plan. Other control descriptions are more project-specific.

Member Mike Maus next noted that based on his media experience, news about topics of concern to the public, such as independent monitoring, needs to be told but in effective sound bites with language the average citizen can understand.

Comment: Macon Cowles: Mr. Cowles, from Boulder, is an attorney who represented the foreman and several members of the Grand Jury who heard the case against Rocky Flats following the Federal Bureau of Investigation raid of the site in 1989. He has worked with citizens on many contamination issues, such as in Globeville, the Exxon Valdez oil spill, and others. He wanted to emphasize to the Board that the community is relying on the Board to make sure that cleanup of the site is done in a way so that it will not be a hazard to future generations. He pointed out that the Board's discussions are confusing with the shorthand, acronyms, and euphemisms that are used. The Board needs to be careful that it is not viewed as an exclusive club. He also noted that the presentation slides used this evening showed contamination in pale shades of yellow and green. These areas should be shown in bright red because in the future the pale colors may fade and not properly represent the hazards present. Mr. Cowles also raised a concern about the demolition of Building 371. He believes it should be cleaned as much as possible and then left standing as a reminder to future generations about the dangers the site poses.

Comment: Alan Trenary: Alan noted at the last meeting he had raised concerns about an acquaintance whose son had died. The son had worked at Rocky Flats, and the father is concerned

about whether his death was a result of his employment. John Rampe with DOE had someone from the site contact the father, and Alan wanted to publicly thank DOE for taking this initiative.

RECOMMENDATION ON THE PROPOSED ACTION MEMORANDUM FOR THE 771/774 GROUNDWATER COLLECTION SYSTTEM:

The Board discussed the recommendation that was drafted during its November 20 Committee Night. There are two parts to the recommendation. The first section addresses concern about the carbon tetrachloride plume and the fact that the site is proposing to design and install the groundwater collection system without having fully characterized the contamination plume. The recommendation asks that the site provide a complete description of the carbon tetrachloride contamination sources and plumes and any additional sampling and analysis that will be done to better define the extent of contamination. It further asks that the document describe the procedures used to remove carbon tetrachloride free product, how the collection system will insure capture of the migrating contaminants, and a description of the treatment to be provided for contaminated groundwater that may be released from the collection system.

The second part of the recommendation raises two other concerns. The first is the need for the document to describe how the water collected from the collection system will be monitored and managed. Second, an issue is raised that the site proposes to leave the tunnel near the building in place where the Board is concerned it could serve as a conduit for groundwater contamination and could also be a subsidence and erosion problem.

Because the Board had reviewed the preliminary draft of the document in preparing these comments, a question was raised as to whether the recommendations were relevant to this latest draft of the Proposed Action Memorandum that was released for official public comment. The only recommendation that appeared to have been addressed dealt with information on the monitoring and management of the discharge from the collection system. The document states that it will be addressed in the site's Integrated Monitoring Plan as a foundation drain. Other than this reference the document provided no details. The Board decided to modify the recommendation to ask that the specific language from the Integrated Monitoring Plan be added to the Proposed Action Memorandum, rather than just providing the reference.

The Board approved the recommendation by consensus.

DISCUSSION OF FUTURE TOPICS, ISSUES AND DOCUMENTS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION:

Ken Korkia reviewed a list of future topics the Board may wish to consider. The list first included specific documents that are or soon will be available for public review. These include (with timeframes notes in parentheses):

- Building 371 Decommissioning Operations Plan (December – January)
- 903 Pad Lip Area Interim Measure / Interim Remedial Action (December – January)
- Groundwater Interim Measure / Interim Remedial Action (January – February)
- Original Landfill Interim Measure / Interim Remedial Action (early spring)
- Comprehensive Conservation Plan / Environmental Impact Statement for the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (February – March)

The list next included items that are planned later in 2004. These include:

- Post-Rocky Flats Cleanup Agreement (early spring)
- Surface Water Management Plan (mid-late spring)
- Land Configuration Study (late spring – early summer)

Finally, there are some discussions that Board members have noted as being significant, but for which there is not a specific document or proposal. These include:

- Post-closure controls in the Industrial Area
- Comprehensive Risk Assessment
- Long-Term Stewardship Transition
- Annual "State of the Flats" Presentation

In discussing these items, the Board noted that its first priorities would be the Building 371 Decommissioning Operations Plan and the 903 Pad Lip Area Interim Measure / Interim Remedial Action. At the December Committee Night, the members will review and develop comments and recommendations on the Building 371 plan. Approval of these recommendations will occur at the January 8 Board meeting. The Board will begin its investigation of the 903 Pad Lip by scheduling an introductory presentation at the January 8 meeting, with further discussion and development of comments at the January Committee Night.

The next topic discussed was a request by DOE for the Board to sponsor the annual State of the Flats meeting. In previous years, DOE has held a special community meeting at the beginning of the year to outline the accomplishments of the previous year and to preview the work scheduled for the coming year. They have decided not to hold a special meeting this coming year, but instead would like to use part of a board meeting for this purpose. Members noted with all the documents forthcoming it would not be possible to use a board meeting in January or February. Still, some members feel it is important for the Board to be reaching out to the public. Victor Holm suggested that if members feel strongly that DOE should continue to sponsor this meeting, they should let him know and he will draft a letter to that effect. Otherwise, the earliest that the Board could sponsor the presentation would be in March.

With time for this discussion running out, Ken Korkia volunteered to develop a proposal for the Board on how it might pursue several tracks to address the remainder of the issues. The Board was in general agreement that all the issues are significant and should be addressed. Members will use email to discuss and prioritize these issues.

In closing the regular portion of the meeting, member Bill McNeill raised the possibility of the Board sending a letter of commendation to Jerry Henderson. The Board agreed this would be appropriate and Bill volunteered to draft the letter.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Victor Holm announced the purpose of the Executive Session was to discuss future staffing now that the Board has one less staff member. With the budget situation as it is, the Board will not be able to afford three full-time staff members. A suggestion was raised that the Board should rely more on the internal expertise of the members. Another possibility is to ask one of our former staff members, who might be available to work on an as needed basis. A member also suggested that we could look at hiring consultants to help out on specific projects. In further discussion, a member stated that the Board needs someone who understands the issues and is technically

proficient to review documents and develop recommendations for the Board to consider.

Victor Holm suggested that the Board might consider hiring outside help to assist in office administration. Ken Korkia followed-up with a suggestion that outreach activities might be a possible area as well. Anne Fenerty noted she disagreed with these ideas, stating the Board should be looking at how to augment its technical assistance, not administrative.

A suggestion was made that the Board contact former staff member Noelle Green to see if she can start working on reviewing the 371 Decommissioning Operations. Victor Holm suggested members step forward as issue managers. For example, he could take the lead on the 903 Pad Lip Area, while Joe Downey, for instance, could work on the groundwater document. A further suggestion was made that perhaps we could hire help with the administrative support, such as bookkeeping. Another member suggested Mike Maus as a good candidate to champion the Board outreach efforts.

Victor concluded the session by noting the Board needs to finalize its budget by January. This effort will rebuild the budget from the bottom up with full knowledge of exactly how much money we are going to have for next year. A question was raised whether the Board should plan on spending its entire carryover from this year in the next year, or to dole it out over several years. One member suggested that we should spend it all so that DOE doesn't take it away or reduce our future funding. She also raised the concern that the Board doesn't have a resolution about its obligations on its former office lease.

NEXT MEETING:

Date: January 8, 6 to 9:00 p.m.

Location: College Hill Library, Room L211, Front Range Community College, 3705 W. 112th Avenue, Westminster

Agenda:

- *Introductory Presentation and Discussion on the 903 Pad Lip Area Interim Measure / Interim Remedial Action*

- *Consideration and Approval of Comments and Recommendations on Modifications to the Building 371 Decommissioning Operations Plan*

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:00 p.m. *

(* Taped transcript of full meeting is available in the RFCAB office.)

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Anne Fenerty, Secretary
Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board

The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board is a community advisory group that reviews and provides recommendations on cleanup plans for Rocky Flats, a former nuclear weapons plant outside of Denver, Colorado.

[Home](#) | [About RFCAB](#) | [Board Members](#) | [About Rocky Flats](#) | [RFCAB Documents](#) | [Related Links](#) | [Public Involvement](#) | [Board Vacancies](#) | [Special Projects](#) | [Contact](#)